

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated April 18, 2003. Claims 1-78 remain pending. Claims 79-109 have been cancelled, without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter presented therein. Claims 1, 21, 39, and 59, which are independent, have been amended to define still more clearly what Applicants regard as their invention. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

The drawings were objected to for the reasons given in paragraph 1 of the Office Action. In particular, the Office Action states that the load lock and the second substrate having an envelope fixedly disposed around the second substrate and a spacer fixedly disposed inside the substrate, recited in the claims, must be shown in the drawings. Attached is a Request For Approval To Make Drawing Change in which it is proposed to amend Fig. 1A to insert a load lock therein. Support for this proposed change is found in the originally-filed specification, at least from page 28, line 22 to page 29, line 7. Entry of the proposed drawing change is respectfully requested. Also, Applicants note that the second substrate, the envelope, and the spacer are shown in the drawings, at least in Fig. 1A (see envelope 113 and spacer 115).¹ Accordingly, it is believed that the objection to the drawings has been overcome, and its withdrawal is therefore respectfully requested.

The Abstract has been amended in accordance with the requirement set forth in paragraph 2 of the Office Action.

1/ It should be understood that the second substrate, envelope, and spacer depicted in Fig. 1A are referred to for illustrative purposes only, and the claims should not be construed as being limited in scope merely to the embodiment depicted in Fig. 1A.

Claims 1-109 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,433,639 (Zahuta) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,004,181 (Robinson).

Initially, cancellation of Claims 79-109 render their rejection moot.

As amended, independent Claim 1 is directed to a method of manufacturing an image displaying apparatus, comprising the steps of a: preparing a first substrate on which phosphor exciting means is disposed and a second substrate on which phosphors emitting light by the phosphor exciting means is disposed under the vacuum atmosphere, b: carrying one or both of the first and second substrates into a getter processing chamber in the vacuum atmosphere under the vacuum atmosphere, and subjecting to getter processing said one substrate carried, or one or both of the substrates carried. The method also comprises a step of c: carrying the first and second substrates into a seal processing chamber in the vacuum atmosphere under the vacuum atmosphere, and heat sealing the substrates in an opposing state. Each processing chamber is evacuated into 10^4 Pa or more lower pressure.

Zahuta et al. relates to a method for adjusting a “dewar assembly”, but is not seen to teach or suggest a method of manufacturing an image displaying apparatus, let alone a method having steps as recited in Claim 1, wherein, within a vacuum atmosphere, a substrate is carried and conveyed into a plurality of processing chambers as recited in that claim, and wherein each processing chamber is evacuated into 10^4 Pa or more lower pressure.

Robinson relates to the method of manufacturing a image displaying apparatus, but is not seen to disclose or suggest a method of manufacturing an image

display apparatus having the steps recited in Claim 1, wherein, within a vacuum atmosphere, a substrate is carried and conveyed into a plurality of processing chambers as recited in that claim, and wherein each processing chamber is evacuated into 10^{-4} Pa or more lower pressure.

Moreover, Applicants assert that one skilled in the relevant art would not have been motivated to combine the adjusting method of the “dewar assembly” of Zahuta et al. with the method of manufacturing an image displaying apparatus of Robinson, because each of those methods appears to be directed to a different objective and requires seemingly different performance criteria and conditions.

In case of the method of manufacturing an image displaying apparatus, it is an objective is to provide excellent displaying characteristics, and thus a high degree of evacuation of the device would be required. According to the present invention, for example, a very high degree of evacuation of the processing chambers into 10^{-4} Pa or more lower pressure is employed. Zahuta et al. does not appear to be concerned with a need to provide excellent display characteristics, let alone doing so by employing a very high degree of evacuation of processing chambers into 10^{-4} Pa or more lower pressure. For all of these reasons, there would have been no reason why one skilled in the art, who was confronted with the same objective as was faced by Applicants at the time of their invention, would have even consulted Zahuta et al., let alone been motivated to combine it with Robinson in the manner proposed in the Office Action.

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is submitted that it would not have been obvious to combine Zahuta et al. and Robinson in the manner proposed in the Office

Action, in an attempt to attain the method set forth in Claim 1. Claim 1 is believed clearly patentable over those references, whether considered separately or in combination.

Independent Claims 21, 39, and 59 each recite a method of manufacturing an image display apparatus, wherein within a vacuum atmosphere, a substrate is carried and conveyed into a plurality of processing chambers as recited in that claim, and wherein each processing chamber is evacuated into 10^4 Pa or more lower pressure. For reasons substantially similar to those given above in connection with Claim 1, those independent claims also are believed clearly patentable over Zahuta et al. and Robinson, whether considered separately or in combination.

A review of the other art of record has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicants' opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as a reference against the independent claims herein. Those claims are therefore believed patentable over the art of record.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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